

The following table gives an indication of the rapid increase in the number of inspections of recent years :—

Year.				Number of Inspections.	Year.				Number of Inspections.
1915-16	..	..	..	17,857	1921-22	..	..	..	31,876
1916-17	..	..	..	19,362	1922-23	..	..	..	33,124
1917-18	..	..	..	21,118	1923-24	..	..	..	32,891
1918-19	..	..	..	22,614	1924-25	..	..	..	35,797
1919-20	..	..	..	25,824	1925-26	..	..	..	42,529
1920-21	..	..	..	28,553	1926-27	..	..	..	47,209

Fisheries.

The loss on the Fisheries Branch for 1926-27 amounted to about £1,200. This was largely due to the poor oyster season, which was the worst experienced for a considerable number of years. The net profit for the season was £1,347 11s. 7d., as compared with £2,517 3s. 11d. for the previous season. The inferior quality of the oysters necessitated closing the season much earlier than usual. The following is a return of the number of sacks picked from the beds since 1911, the gross sales each year, and the net profit earned :—

Year.			Number of Sacks.	Gross Sales.	Year.			Number of Sacks.	Gross Sales.
				£ s. d.				£ s. d.	
1911 ..	..	..	4,782	3,013 6 8	1919 ..	..	7,256	5,363 8 3	
1912 ..	..	..	7,728	5,212 0 0	1920 ..	..	6,979	6,296 8 6	
1913 ..	..	..	9,069	6,157 14 0	1921 ..	..	7,219	7,763 7 4	
1914 ..	..	..	8,361	5,770 3 0	1922 ..	..	7,323	7,702 10 0	
1915 ..	..	..	9,634	6,714 18 6	1923 ..	..	6,800	7,355 17 6	
1916 ..	..	..	8,172	5,692 11 6	1924 ..	..	6,841	8,395 9 3	
1917 ..	..	..	10,357	6,890 3 0	1925 ..	..	8,297	10,205 5 0	
1918 ..	..	..	10,422	7,516 13 6	1926 ..	..	6,771	8,344 10 0	

During the past year or so erratic climatic conditions and sea temperatures have prevailed. The Chief Inspector of Fisheries has been giving the subject his close attention, but it is impossible at the present juncture to venture definite opinion.

Ross Sea Dependency.

The royalties on whale-oil received in connection with the Ross Sea Dependency realized a substantial increase during 1926-27. The following shows the revenue year by year since the Dependency has been under the Department's administration : Year, 1923-24, £200 ; 1924-25, £200 ; 1925-26, £1,720 12s. 6d. ; 1926-27, £2,921 5s.

Foreshore Revenue.

The revenue from foreshores for the year under review amounted to £5,988 17s. 4d., as compared with £5,704 2s. 4d. for the previous year.

Meteorological Branch.

The Meteorological Branch was transferred to the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research during the year, this Department thereby being relieved of expenditure approximating £6,000 per annum. As the appropriation for the branch had been included under vote "Marine Department," we continued to make payments for the whole year on behalf of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research.

WESTPORT HARBOUR.

The cash account in respect of Westport Harbour also shows a substantial surplus. The following are the receipts and payments of the past six years :—

Year.				Receipts. £	Payments. £
1921-22	..	..	..	31,412	75,642
1922-23	..	..	..	44,020	50,303
1923-24	..	..	..	44,126	44,588
1924-25	..	..	..	49,566	40,949
1925-26	..	..	..	56,920	49,876
1926-27	..	..	..	63,181	46,907